

(b) reducing the ore until at least a part of the ore is metallized, the resultant reduced ore containing at least a part of the metallized metal being produced, and devolatilizing the carbonaceous material until a devolatilized carbonaceous material having a volatile content of less than 10 weight % is obtained;

(c) charging the devolatilized carbonaceous material and the ore containing at least a part of the metallized metal from step (b) into a smelting furnace having a metal bath; and

(d) blowing a gas containing 20% or more of oxygen into the metal bath in the smelting furnace to produce molten iron.

B1
Please add the following claims:

B2
--42. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the step (b) of reducing the ore and devolatilizing the carbonaceous material comprises reducing the ore and devolatilizing the carbonaceous material at a temperature of at least 950°C in the reacting furnace.

43. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the temperature is 950°C.

44. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the temperature is 1,000°C.

45. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the temperature is 1,200°C.

46. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the temperature is 1,250°C.

47. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the step (b) of reducing the ore comprises reducing the ore until the ore has a metallization of 60% or more.

48. (New) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of controlling a post combustion rate within a range of 40 to 80% at a throat of the smelting furnace, the gas oxidation degree being defined as follows:

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$$\text{post combustion rate (\%)} = \{ (\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}) / (\text{CO} + \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O}) \} \times 100.--$$

APPLICANTS' CLAIM FOR PRIORITY UNDER 35 USC 119:

The Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge applicants' claim for priority under 35 USC 119 and receipt of the certified copies of the priority documents that were filed on September 11, 2000 in the parent application Serial No. 09/598,605 filed June 21, 2000.